

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A vacuum vaporization equipment for metallizing a strip substrate, comprising:

[[-]] a plurality of vaporization sources arranged side by side and aligned transversely with respect to the web feeding direction, each of said vaporization sources being heated and continuously fed with a metal which is liquefied and vaporized by each of said vaporization sources respectively, each of said vaporization sources having a monolithic body extending along a main longitudinal direction and including a first surface molten metal pool forming means and a second surface molten metal pool forming means spaced apart from said first surface pool forming means but in close proximity to said first surface pool forming means for increasing the wettability of molten metal in a location adjacent to said first pool forming means and said second pool forming means, to maintain said monolithic body having a continuous conductive cross section and means with said first surface means, each of said surface means provided for increasing the wettability of molten metal in a location;

[[-]] a feeding means for feeding said substrate over said vaporization sources along a feed direction;

[[-]] a continuous delivery means for the delivery of metal wire to said vaporization sources, wherein each of said vaporization sources holds at least two pools of molten metal, each pool being ~~maintained~~ separate from the other pool by each said surface pool forming means thereof, aligned along said longitudinal direction, and wherein ~~each of~~ one of said two pools is fed by a corresponding metal wire continuously delivered by said corresponding

continuous delivery means and another of said two pools is fed by another corresponding metal wire continuously delivered by said corresponding continuous delivery means.

2. (Currently Amended) The equipment according to claim 1, wherein said first and second surface pool forming means are defined as two cavities ~~which are~~ aligned along said longitudinal direction, said cavities defining areas for the formation of said pools of molten metal.

3. (Previously Presented) The equipment according to claim 2, wherein said two cavities of each source have a rectangular shape in plan view, said rectangular shape is elongated along said longitudinal direction.

4. (Previously Presented) The equipment according to claim 1, wherein said vaporization sources are made of an electrically conducting material and are heated by Joule effect as a result of the passage of current.

5. (Previously Presented) The equipment according to claim 2, wherein said vaporization sources are made of an electrically conducting material and are heated by the Joule effect as a result of the passage of current.

6. (Previously Presented) The equipment according to claim 3, wherein said

vaporization sources are made of an electrically conducting material and are heated by the Joule effect as a result of the passage of current.

7. (Currently Amended) The equipment according to claim 1, wherein each of said surface pool forming means includes a respective surface superficial depression so as to form a respective pool of molten metal.

8. (Previously Presented) The equipment according to claim 7, wherein each of said surface depressions is formed by a plurality of superficial incision lines.

9. (Currently Amended) The equipment according to claim 1, wherein each of said surface pool forming means is defined in the region of a plurality of superficially processed lines.

10. (Previously Presented) The equipment according to claim 9, wherein said superficially processed lines are superficial incision lines.

11. (Previously Presented) The equipment according to claim 7, wherein each of said superficial depressions is formed by a single lowered surface portion of said source.

12. (Currently Amended) The equipment according to claim 9, wherein said

superficially processed lines alter the superficial wettability of the surface of said source in said surface pool forming means where at least two pools are formed.

13. (Previously Presented) The equipment according to claim 10, wherein said superficial incision lines are laser incision lines.

14. (Previously Presented) The equipment according to claim 1, wherein said vaporization sources are alongside each other in an alignment transverse to the direction in which said substrate is fed.

15. (Previously Presented) The equipment according to claim 14, wherein said vaporization sources are offset and staggered with respect to each other in an alignment transverse to the direction in which said substrate is fed.

16. (Previously Presented) The equipment according to claim 1, wherein said sources are aligned with their longitudinal direction parallel to said feed direction of said substrate.

17. (Currently Amended) A source for the vaporization of a metal under vacuum comprising:

a monolithic body with an upper surface, said body being elongated in a longitudinal direction along a direction parallel with respect to an advancement direction of a substrate, and

said upper surface having surface features defining ~~containing~~ at least two pools of molten metal, said body including a first surface pool forming means for retaining one said pool of molten metal and a second surface pool forming means for retaining another pool of molten metal whereby said first pool forming means and said second pool forming means increase the overall wetted surface of molten metal, said first pool forming means being spaced apart from and adjacent to said second pool forming means ~~spaced apart from said first surface means but in close proximity to said first surface means to maintain;~~

an electrical connection of said monolithic body with connections to an electrical source for heating said monolithic body and each of said first pool forming means and said second pool forming means, said monolithic body being formed of electrically conducting material with a continuous conductive cross section ~~means with~~ including continuous regions of said first surface pool forming means and said second surface pool forming means allowing electrical current to pass therethrough upon electrical connection to said electrical source, each of said surface pool forming means provided for increasing the wettability of molten metal in a location and said first and second pool forming means retaining each pool separate from the other pool thereon.

18. (Currently Amended) The source according to claim 17, wherein said upper surface has a pair of cavities defining said pair of ~~surface~~ means alongside each other in said longitudinal direction to form two wells of molten metal.

19. (Currently Amended) A source for the vaporization of a metal under vacuum comprising:

an electrically conducting monolithic body which is elongated in a longitudinal direction along a direction parallel with respect to an advancement direction of a substrate, said body forming a continuous boat or bar with two opposite ends, wherein an upper surface of said boat or bar ~~holds at least two pools of molten metal, and said upper surface~~ includes a first pool forming surface means and a second pool forming surface means adjacent to ~~spaced apart from~~ said first surface pool forming means ~~but in close proximity to said first surface means~~

an electrical connection of said monolithic body with an electrical source for passing electric current through said monolithic body by the direct passage of current through said monolithic body and each of said first pool forming means and said second pool forming means, said monolithic body [[to]] maintaining a continuous conductive cross section in electrical connection with said electrical source with a cross section between said first pool forming means and said second pool forming means being substantially constant ~~means with said first surface means~~, each of said surface pool forming means provided for increasing the ~~wettability~~ wetted surface of molten metal ~~[[on]]~~ in a location and retaining each pool separate from the other pool thereon;

a continuous delivery means for the delivery of metal wire to said vaporization sources, wherein each of said vaporization sources holds at least two pools of molten metal, each pool being separate from the other pool by each said surface pool forming means thereof, aligned along said longitudinal direction, and wherein one of said two pools is fed by a corresponding

metal wire continuously delivered by said corresponding continuous delivery means and another of said two pools is fed by another corresponding metal wire continuously delivered by said corresponding continuous delivery means.

20. (Currently Amended) The source according to claim 19, wherein a pair of cavities are provided on said upper surface, arranged alongside each other in said longitudinal direction to form two wells of molten metal.

21. (Previously Presented) The source according to claim 20, wherein said cavities have a rectangular shape in a plan view.

22. (Previously Presented) The source according to claim 20, wherein said cavities have substantially flat bottoms.

23. (Canceled)

24. (Currently Amended) The source according to claim 19, wherein said two surface pool forming means form said two pools of molten metal, each said surface pool forming means ~~being defined in a region of~~ comprising a plurality of superficially processed lines.

25. (Previously Presented) The source according to claim 24, wherein said superficially

processed lines are superficial incision lines.

26. (Currently Amended) The source according to claim 24, wherein said superficially processed lines alter the superficial wettability of the surface of said source in said surface pool forming means where said at least two pools are formed.

27. (Previously Presented) The source according to claim 25, wherein said superficial incision lines are laser incision lines.

28. (Currently Amended) A vacuum vaporization plant for the metallization of a web-like substrate, the vaporization plant comprising:

[[-]] a plurality of vaporization sources arranged side by side and aligned with respect to the web feeding direction, each of said vaporization sources supplied with a metal wire which is liquefied and vaporized by said vaporization sources, each of said vaporization sources having a body elongated in a respective main longitudinal direction and including a first surface pool forming means and a second surface pool forming means spaced apart from said first surface means but in close proximity to said first surface pool forming means with each source made of a monolithic body to maintain a continuous conductive cross section [[means]] with said first pool forming surface means and said second pool forming surface means, each of said surface pool forming means provided for increasing the wettability surface of molten metal in a location;

[[-]] a feeding means for feeding said substrate above said sources, in a feeding direction inclined from said main longitudinal direction, said vaporization sources being arranged alongside each other in an alignment substantially perpendicular to said feeding direction;

[[-]] a continuous supplying means for supplying a ~~respective said~~ metal wire to said first surface pool forming means and for supplying another metal wire to said second surface pool forming means of each of said sources;

[[-]] a supporting means for supporting said sources and providing electrical connection for each source for heating said sources, wherein each of said sources holds at least two pools of molten metal, each pool being maintained separate from the other pool by each of said first and said second surface pool forming means, wherein each of said pools of molten metal is fed continuously with said respective metal wire supplied by a respective supplying means and wherein said sources are arranged with their main longitudinal direction inclined with respect to said direction of feeding of said substrate at an angle other than 0° and 90° .

29. (Previously Presented) The plant according to Claim 28, wherein said at least two pools of each source are aligned with each other approximately in said main longitudinal direction of said sources.

30. (Previously Presented) The plant according to Claim 28, wherein said angle between said main longitudinal direction of each source and said direction of feeding of said

substrate is such as to position mutually said pools of molten metal of adjacent sources so that they are at least partially staggered in the direction of said alignment, substantially perpendicular to said direction of feeding of said substrate.

31. (Currently Amended) The plant according to Claim 28, wherein each of said surface pool forming means include a respective surface superficial depression so as to form a respective pool of molten metal.

32. (Previously Presented) The plant according to Claim 31, wherein each of said surface depressions is formed by a plurality of superficial incision lines.

33. (Currently Amended) The plant according to Claim 28, wherein each of said two surface pool forming means provides for the formation of pools of liquid metal, each surface pool forming means being defined in a region of a plurality of superficially processed lines.

34. (Previously Presented) The plant according to Claim 33, wherein said superficially processed lines are superficial incision lines.

35. (Previously Presented) The plant according to Claim 31, wherein each of said superficial depressions is formed by a single lowered surface portion of said source.

36. (Previously Presented) The plant according to claim 28, wherein said angle between said main longitudinal direction of said sources and said direction of feeding of said substrate is between 15° and 60° .

37. (Previously Presented) The plant according to claim 28, wherein said angle between said main longitudinal direction of said sources and said direction of feeding of said substrate is between 20° and 55° .

38. (Previously Presented) The plant according to claim 28, wherein said angle between said main longitudinal direction of said sources and said direction of feeding of said substrate is between 25° and 45° .